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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Alterity Models in Counseling: When We Talk About Diversity, What Are We Actually Talking About?

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Abstract In this article, the author identifies six distinct models of alterity (the state of being different) that guide counselors' practice with clients from traditionally under-represented groups. The models are: political correctness, difference blindness, multiculturalism, structural diversity, social justice advocacy, and decolonization. The article involves (a) illustrating each model with a contextualizing vignette, (b) reviewing the interdisciplinary literature related to each model, and (c) arguing how each model may be expressed by counselors in potentially positive or negative ways.

Keywords Multiculturalism · Diversity · Social justice · Color-blind · Decolonization · Alterity

Introduction

Alterity is defined as the state of being different or *Other* (Bauman and Gingrich 2006). Addressing alterity means engaging the societal processes that position certain identities with "otherness" as opposed to "sameness" or "belonging." Models of alterity acknowledge the existence of *othering* and address working with and for those who have membership in social and cultural groups that are non-dominant and have been traditionally under-valued and under-represented (Figueira 2007).

While discussions regarding social and cultural differences have become ubiquitous within the field of counseling, a more nuanced dialogue regarding the various pathways towards working with the Other has been lacking. That is to say, while attention and focus on alterity have become fundamental to counseling practice, the assumptions—sometimes unarticulated or unacknowledged—that inform *how* one engages with social and cultural difference may vary widely. Expanding on the work of Kathleen Manning (2009), this article will identify and critically examine six distinct models of alterity that typically are utilized within the field of

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counseling. Working from Manning's discussion, the models discussed in this article have been re-conceptualized for counseling and include political correctness, difference blindness, multiculturalism, structural diversity, social justice advocacy, and decolonization.

While there is overlap between these models, each also contains unique presuppositions that distinguish them from each other. There is a gap within the counseling literature in identifying and differentiating these various models of alterity. As stated by Manning (2009), "Without a clear understanding of one's approach, difficulties and misunderstandings may arise when philosophies [about the Other] clash or different points of view are acted upon but not made clear" (p. 12). Due to a current lack of differentiation of these models of alterity within the counseling literature, counseling professionals may use familiar but perhaps ungenerative words and constructs, while acting under the assumption that all stakeholders in the conversation are addressing the same idea, though they are actually talking about differing concepts involving distinctly different philosophical assumptions. In such instances clashes and misunderstandings are likely to occur, which may potentially result in a hindering of the helping process.

In order to try to unpack each of the six models the author will (a) illustrate each model with a contextualizing vignette, (b) review the interdisciplinary literature related to each model, and (c) discuss how each model may be expressed by counselors in potentially positive or negative ways. The goal is to underscore the presuppositions of each model to allow counselors to recognize their unarticulated implications, and to engender greater intention and reflexivity within the field regarding work with the Other.

Political Correctness

Case Vignette

Bill is a clinical mental health counselor with 20 years experience. He recently joined the staff of a nonprofit community counseling agency and attended a week of diversity training as part of his orientation. As a result of the training, he realized that many of his commonly used words and phrases had the potential to alienate some clients and dishonor their unique social location in the world. With his new knowledge, he made a commitment to discontinue using the old words and phrases and adopt a new language set. For example, when referring to clients Bill has become careful to use 'person first' language such as a "person with a disability" rather than "a handicapped person" and the gender respectful term "women" rather than "girls" when referring to adult females. At this point, Bill feels that this concession about the words he uses is more than adequate given his long-term experience and knowledge of counseling.

Literature Review

The term "politically correct" (PC) originated within leftist political movements as early as the 1930's and 40's as sarcastic, humorous and/or self-deflating criticism for those who took their own liberal political doctrine to intolerant extremes. It was something of an inside 'joke' used by political radicals to tease their own brethren and sisters about being overly dogmatic while simultaneously being aligned with social change (Richer and Weir 1995).

By the 1980's political correctness became a cultural phenomenon that sought to critically evaluate the use of terminology that reinforced the marginalization of under-represented groups and reproduced the alienation of non-dominant social identities. Grounded in a philosophical premise that language is not merely descriptive but is also constitutive (Derrida 1997), using terms such as *people-of-color* rather than *minorities,* and *women* rather than *girls* is considered to promote respect and dignity for those who have been traditionally marginalized, while also avoiding humiliation and cruelty. An emerging body of research has identified the detrimental impact of commonplace yet demeaning language on the mental health and wellbeing of people of color (cf., Hwang and Goto 2009; Nadal et al. 2014). Linguistic indignities enacted by counselors have been found to be predictive of a weaker therapeutic alliance (Constantine 2007) and are often associated with unilateral terminations (Owen et al. 2011).

Positives and Negatives of Relying on a PC Model

In its most positive expression, PC is an attempt to change unequal systems in society through the power of language. Embracing PC language may serve as an initial step toward reflecting upon issues of social power, and racial and gender privilege (Johnson 2006). Such reflections may attune the counselor to linguistic microaggressions (Sue 2010), and what it might be like for some clients to be incessantly *othered* through standard language.

For counselor Bill in the current case vignette, utilizing politically correct language may assist him in developing an awareness of negative beliefs that he has internalized and to foster a more intentional analysis of alterity issues. However, the PC model may be negatively expressed when one utilizes PC language but maintains an attitude of superiority toward under-represented groups, or renames those different from oneself without their consent (Bird 1999). A negative expression of political correctness may also occur when people just change their language without reflecting upon the underlying systems of power and oppression. Referring to a client as a *chairperson* of the board rather than a *chairman* without understanding or examining the influence of systemic sexism and patriarchy is to engage in what Paulo Freire (1993) described as *verbalism.* In the words of Freire:

> When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism,* into an alienated and alienating "blah." It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action. (1993, p. 87)

Difference (Color) Blindness

Case Vignette

Debbie, a career counselor, is a member of a state agency that seeks to increase college enrollment for first-generation college students. The agency director has asked Debbie to chair a task force that will focus on increasing college enrollment for youth of color in the State. A fellow task force member has expressed that, in his opinion, by focusing specifically on youth of color, the State is giving a minority group preferential treatment, an act of de-facto discriminating against white youth. He believes that sexual orientation, racial heritage, and

other social locations are irrelevant and should not factor into the agency's action plans. Debbie, who has internalized the belief that she responds no differently to one's sexual orientation or skin color than she does to one's shoe size, finds herself drawn to her colleague's position, which he persuasively presents at every task force meeting.

Literature Review

The 'difference blindness' model of alterity is rooted in the color blind literature (Neville et al. 2006). United States Supreme Court Justice John Marshal Harlan initially voiced the color blind perspective in 1886 within his dissenting opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a landmark Supreme Court decision that upheld "separate but equal" racial segregation. When Justice Harlan called for a color blind society, he envisioned a civilization in which one's racial or ethnic group membership was irrelevant to how one is treated. Justice Harlan's idea has transformed into

- the intentional act of ignoring ethnic and racial differences among individuals (Bonilla-Silva 2006);
- the belief that ethnicity or race is invisible or irrelevant (Sue 2010);
- the denial or minimization of race and/or racism (Neville et al. 2006).

Charitably speaking, difference blindness is a term that captures the intent to be open, helpful, fair and even multiculturally sensitive to individuals who stand out as different. A difference blindness disposition is sometimes understood as being egalitarian because it constructs all persons as worthy of dignity, respect, and equality, regardless of culture, race or ethnicity (Taylor 1992). As Sue (2010) suggests, difference blindness may be based on the beneficent assumption that being blind to racial differences equates to being unbiased, and can promote racial harmony. Difference blindness can be summed up by such statements as "There's only one race in this school, the human race!" or "To me, my client's sexual orientation is like the color of my client's eyes —it's just not that significant!"

Alterity scholars have a different perspective on the concept of difference blindness. Rather than it promoting equity, they point out that difference blindness reinforces the oppression of persons from non-dominant groups by minimizing or denying their personal and institutional experiences of aversive, more pernicious forms of marginalization (Bonilla-Silva 2006). When one takes a difference blindness position, only overt forms of discrimination are recognized, such as racial or homophobic slurs and conspicuous hate crimes. What goes unnoticed by those who invest in a difference blindness position are the less overt, but very significant experiences of subversive forms of discrimination, such as systemic racism and microaggressions (Sue 2010; Smith and Shin 2014).

Positives and Negatives of Relying on Difference Blindness

For career counselor Debbie, the benefits of operating from a difference blindness model of alterity lie primarily in identifying with acts of good will and fairness: the internal sense of peace that comes with knowing that one operates from a place of good-faith towards all persons, regardless of the diversity of background and social identity (Smith et al. 2014). Many who operate from a difference blindness model connect strongly with Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement of judging others by their character rather than the color of their skin, and such a

connection fortifies their sense of egalitarianism and beneficence (Turner 1996). It is also likely that by investing in a difference blindness model of alterity, Debbie avoids the discomfort that is tied to conversations and conflicts about social inequity and inequality.

There will, however, also be significant drawbacks in this regard for counselors like Debbie. Operating from a difference blindness model means racial and cultural differences will likely be considered a taboo topic (Wells et al. 2005). As a result, such counselors will be limited in understanding how systemic forms of modern oppression impact colleagues, students, and clients from traditionally marginalized groups, and any capacity for empathizing with such experiences will be limited (Burkard and Knox 2004). Debbie will also likely avoid broaching topics of social and cultural difference with students, thereby missing out on rich opportunities to support and affirm their experiences (Day-Vines et al. 2007). Finally, her own internalized prejudice may go unexamined, and the potential for committing alienating microaggressions towards students is likely (Yasso et al. 2009).

Multiculturalism

Case Vignette

Dr. Randal, a counselor educator, was excited to be teaching a course on Multicultural Counseling. Dr. Randal has traveled widely and has a sincere appreciation for cultural variability. His syllabus focuses on celebrating the diversity of the world's cultures, with lessons featuring topics like sociological constructions of culture, the process of acculturation, and culturally-specific approaches to wellness. His culminating activity calls for student groups to present on healing rituals found within a culture of their choosing.

Dr. Randall, however, was surprised by some of the negative feedback that he received in his course evaluations. A few students expressed that the course was shallow and failed to capture their experience as members of under-represented groups. One student suggested that the culminating activity had been a colonizing act of cultural appropriation. Dr. Randall felt hurt, attacked, and confused by such negative feedback.

Literature Review

The term *multiculturalism* has often been used interchangeably with *cultural pluralism*. The premise of both multiculturalism and cultural pluralism is linguistically self-evident: both constructs underscore the fact that a plurality of cultures is present in the human experience. They affirm that multiple cultural norms—not just European, middle class, heterosexual culture—are to be honored, celebrated, and incorporated into the work of counseling. Multiculturalism has been operationalized through measurements of multicultural competence: the degree to which a counselor demonstrates multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills (Sue et al. 1992).

Multiculturalism is perhaps the leading model of alterity in the field of counseling today, having been dubbed the "fourth force" of counseling. For over 30 years now this approach has been prominently positioned within the field of counseling through ethical codes (e.g., ACA 2005), training standards (e.g., CACREP 2009), research (e.g., D'Andrea and Heckman 2008) and standards of best practice (e.g., Ponterotto et al. 2010). Research outcomes also suggest

that clients perceive multiculturally competent counselors as more effective (Constantine 2002). Culturally sensitive counseling interventions have also been found to promote positive outcomes (Sue et al. 2009), particularly for clients from non-dominant social groups.

Positives and Negatives of Relying on Multiculturalism

The movement away from monoculturalism and towards multiculturalism entails a positive assumption: a culturally disparate population of clients will benefit from culturally sensitive counseling; therefore, we must preserve, protect, promote, and respect culturally variant practices of healing, health and wellness. In an increasingly diverse society, it will be important for Dr. Randall's students to be able to work competently with all of their clients. Furthermore, studying multicultural approaches to counseling would not only result in lessening the ignorance and fear that Dr. Randall's students may hold towards members of other cultural groups (Rudman et al. 2001), it would likely also foster a new generation of counselors with the potential to generate neoteric and more inclusive approaches to counseling (Sue and Sue 2008).

What Dr. Randall might fail to understand, however, and a reason that some of his students would probably be dissatisfied with his course, is that the premise of multiculturalism fundamentally requires an *egalitarian environment* of inclusion. Imagine for a moment that a large dinner party attended by a very diverse group of people could symbolize the larger social world. If the hosts wish for everyone to feel welcomed and celebrated, then each guest must feel secure. However, if some guests receive preferential treatment - for example, privileged access to the very best food and the top-shelf drinks, while others receive table scraps; or some guests feel that the hosts continually sexually objectify them throughout the evening; or other guests notice that when they introduce their same-sex spouse, the hosts appear uncomfortable — then many of the guests will leave the party having had a negative experience. While everyone was invited to the same dinner party, and welcomed with smiles, the lived experience of the party was very different depending upon the guests' social and cultural identities.

Like the fictional dinner party, if the aims of multiculturalism are to be met, then there must exist a level playing field. For many people of traditionally under-represented groups who contend daily with entrenched social inequity, the notion of cultural plurality is spurious (San Juan 1995). If multicultural counseling is limited to in-office interventions, and avoids interrupting societal oppression that runs like fault lines through the human experience of alterity, it is likely to do more to sustain inequalities than to interrupt them.

Structural Diversity

Case Vignette

Within a university counseling center, some of the clinicians are concerned about the campus climate that seems to alienate students from traditionally under-represented groups. The counselors, most of whom identify as members of traditionally under-represented groups, have been urging the counseling center director to expand the counseling center's mission to include advocacy work on campus designed to interrupt structural inequities such as white

privilege, heteronormativity and a subversive culture of violence against women. The director of the clinic is frustrated. She has worked very diligently to hire and retain a heterogeneous staff of counselors. She feels that the increasing numbers of diverse counseling staff represents great progress, and cannot understand why her staff desires to engage in political advocacy, rather than meeting the needs of their clients through traditional therapy.

Literature Review

The post-civil rights movement to increase the numerical representation of various racial, ethnic and gender groups within the public and private sphere began within higher education and is referred to as *structural diversity* (Pike and Kuh 2006). As a microcosm of the larger society, institutions of higher education are thought to play a critical role in the desegregation of society. The assumption of structural diversity is that with an increase in the representation of persons from traditionally marginalized groups within academia (or elsewhere), more frequent interactions among persons from various social groups will occur, which will then promote learning and a reduction in prejudicial attitudes (Haslerig et al. 2013).

Within the field of counseling and related fields there have been calls for advancing structural diversity for counselor education faculty (Shin 2008), counselors-in-training (Shin et al. 2011), psychologists-in-training (Rogers and Molina 2006), and family therapists-in-training (Kaplan and Small 2005). Within an increasingly diverse society, it is important for the field of counseling to increase representation of persons from traditionally under-represented groups within its ranks. Producing a more diverse population of counselors will likely enhance the quality of services to clients from traditionally under-represented and marginalized groups and generate new, culturally relevant counseling theories and interventions (Maton et al. 2006).

Positives and Negatives of Relying on Structural Diversity

The clinical director's diligence towards increasing the structural diversity of her counseling staff represents no small engagement with alterity. With an increase in students from traditionally under-represented groups within university populations, it would be important to have counselors from similar social locations who are likely to be perceived by such students as safer and potentially more effective (Farsimadan et al. 2007). Also, increasing the number of counseling staff from traditionally marginalized groups will likely contribute to building a critical mass of diversity on campus, which has been identified as a significant component of effective recruitment and retention of traditionally under-represented students (Grier-Reed et al. 2008).

However, increasing the numerical representation of persons from traditionally under-represented groups would not be in itself sufficient to interrupt the systemic inequalities that negatively affect those from traditionally under-represented and marginalized groups. Such a change would also require raising the critical consciousness of members of the dominant groups. Critical consciousness may be defined as the capacity to reflect and act upon the social forces that perpetuate existing structures of inequality (Freire 1993). For the clinical director in the case vignette, such a development of critical consciousness would likely result in supporting her colleagues' passion and commitment for advocacy. Moreover, with an advance in critical consciousness, the clinical director would also be compelled herself to engage in systemic interventions that promote greater societal equity (Sakamoto and Pitner 2005).

Social Justice Advocacy

Case Vignette

Peter, a clinical mental health counselor in a local counseling agency, worked with a teenage client, Sam, who identified as bi-sexual. As a part of their work, Peter recognized that his client experienced a great deal of duress at school owing to harassment from students, as well as microaggressions from teachers. Peter also learned that the local high school lacked any form of structural support for teens like Sam, such as a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA).

Peter initially reached out to the school counselors to explore the creation of such a group. As the process evolved, however, he found himself also advocating for the needs of sexual-minority students with the principal, the teachers' union, and the school board. It took approximately 5 years, and Sam by then had long graduated, but Peter's advocacy and coalition building efforts paid off. A GSA was established at the high school and it became actively supported by both sexual minority students and their heterosexual allies.

Literature Review

Social justice is defined as "the fundamental valuing of fairness and equity in resources, rights, and treatment for marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society" (Constantine et al. 2007, p. 24). When combined with advocacy, this model of alterity seeks to "change institutionalized policies and practices that impede the well-being of others so as to promote equity of opportunities for education, health, and other basic human rights" (Speight and Vera 2008, p. 59).

A philosophical assumption for counselors who operate from a social justice advocacy model of alterity is that they will regularly depart from traditional in-office counseling and enter the social contexts in which client problems occur, to take action against the kinds of social inequities that inform their clients' suffering. Early forms of social justice advocacy within the field of counseling can be found in Frank Parsons' advocacy for immigrant families, Karen Horney's advocacy for the field to recognize the impact of societal sexism on the well-being of women, and Carl Rogers' call for counseling principles to be used to address social problems (Kiselica and Robinson 2001).

In the past decade, the social justice advocacy model of alterity has ascended swiftly within the field. Ratts et al. (2004) have conceptualized this model as the emerging "5th Force" in the field of counseling. The field has also operationalized social justice advocacy by way of social justice competencies (e.g., Constantine et al. 2007) and advocacy competencies (e.g., Toporek et al. 2009). The model has shown increasing signs of being integrated into school counseling (Bemak and Chung 2005), group work (Smith and Shin 2008), career counseling (Brown 2012), family counseling (Hendricks et al. 2011) and counselor education (Chang et al. 2010).

Positive and Negatives of Relying on Social Justice Advocacy

Given the role that systemic injustice and social inequity plays in the suffering of many clients, a number of alterity scholars conceptualize the social justice advocacy model as being a natural fit for the profession (Chang et al. 2010; Speight and Vera 2008; Smith and Shin 2008). Clinical mental health counselor Peter understood the relative lack of effectiveness that intra-psychic conceptualizations and interventions would be likely to have on the effects of

oppressive environmental conditions. For many clients like Sam, being engaged solely in traditional in-office, intra-personal counseling falls well short of ameliorating distress, particularly distress that originates in systemic rather than individual causes. As stated by Goodman et al. (2004), "unless fundamental change occurs within our neighborhoods, schools, media, culture and religious, political and social institutions, our work with individuals is destined to be, at best, only partially successful" (p. 797).

Negative perspectives of the social justice advocacy model are grounded primarily in political sensibilities. There are some in the field (e.g., Smith et al. 2009) who caution that the model repositions counselor identity away from individual interventions and toward societal interventions, pushing the role of counselors into the professional domain of social work. The social justice model of alterity has also been critiqued for having a liberal, socio-political bias that will necessarily exclude those counselors who identify as politically conservative (Lillis et al. 2005).

Decolonization (Post-Colonialism)

Case Vignette

Lakisha was hired by the tribal council of a native community to direct their local counseling clinic. Her first step was to ask the elders to aid her in reviewing, evaluating and amending all standards of care. The goal for this was to help decolonize the modus operandi of the clinic by centering native epistemology in general, privileging indigenous approaches on healing and wellness specifically, and positioning Euro-Western approaches as secondary options. Using a participatory action research model, data were gathered from all stakeholders within the community.

As a result of this work, many of the standard assessment tools that had been normed on homogenous white populations were significantly revised. Moreover, future treatment plans within the clinic were designed to incorporate helping clients to understand the effects of generational trauma, providing them with opportunities to process historic cultural loss, positioning community harmony as being primary to individual client needs, integrating traditional spirituality, and encouraging consistent practice of cultural traditions such as bead work and subsistence hunting.

Literature Review

A nascent alterity model within the field of counseling is decolonization; also referred to as *post-coloniality* or *post-colonialism.* The main presupposition of this model is the de-centering of western epistemologies. Progenitors of this model submit that the disciplines of counseling and psychology did not rise out of a social vacuum (Ward 2013), but rather are informed by the same epistemological engines that drove European colonialism and domination (Persram 2013). Subsequently, interwoven into the very fabric of counseling are Euro-western ideologies that—intentionally or not—function to maintain cultural, social, and economic power for dominant groups: ideologies such as a capitalist care-for-profit structure, individual diagnosis, and evidence-based and manualized treatment (McDowell and Hernandez 2010). Furthermore, counselors who employ the decolonization model of alterity assume that the field of counseling's unquestioning reliance on

Euro-western epistemology fosters the production of Western hegemony—a complex tapestry of cultural norms that prescribes how the rest of world is to be understood, classified, and fixed (Gramsci 1992). Western hegemony is the sociological force that associates non-dominant groups with low social capital and positions them as being devalued and insignificant.

The praxis of decolonization has been around as long as there have been colonized people. However, within academia, the seeds of the model germinated within interdisciplinary soil, and some scholars within the field of counseling and psychology have begun to utilize this model of alterity with specific indigenous groups (cf., McCubbin and Marsella 2009; Pe-Pua 2006). Others in the field are expanding the application of this model to multiple under-represented and marginalized identities (cf., Goodman and Gorski 2014; Smith 2014).

Positive and Negatives of Relying on Decolonization

A positive aspect to relying on the decolonization model lies in its depth. Of all the alterity models presented in this article, it is decolonization that acknowledges, questions, and seeks to interrupt the social forces that engendered othering and oppression in the first place. Getting down to the root of othering by addressing historical trauma, acknowledging the psychological effects of contemporary disenfranchisement, flattening the counselor-client hierarchy to encourage egalitarianism, fostering authentic collaboration, privileging and incorporating non-western epistemology, working for distributive justice, promoting cultural sovereignty for disenfranchised groups, and endorsing counter-discourses, may be critical to any alterity work within the field of counseling (Pickren 2009; Teo 2013). As Dorothy Figueira (2007) writes, "The reality is that before any theory of alterity can be successful…there needs to occur a decolonization of the other" (p. 144).

A negative of any reliance on this model of alterity might occur if helpful Euro-western approaches are eschewed. Given the extensive assimilation that has occurred amongst the world's people, few non-dominant groups have retained culturally insulated epistemologies. Ultimately, a holistic and integrated approach to health and wellness will likely promote efficacious outcomes. Counselors who operate from a decolonizing model of alterity could seamlessly integrate Ken Wilber's (2000) integral theory into their approach. This calls for the equal valuing of eastern and western epistemologies, taking up both collective and individual lenses, and drawing on both spirituality and science.

Implications

Finally, there are two additional considerations that may have significant implications for the field of counseling as we examine and expand our collective understanding of diversity.

Alterity as a Developmental Process

First, it may be the case that the order in which these six models of alterity have been presented — political correctness to difference blindness, to multiculturalism, to structural diversity, followed by social justice advocacy and decolonization — represents a developmental continuum. That is to say, for counselors who enter the work from a sufficiently monocultural or hegemonic model of alterity, the sequential order of the models within this article may be experienced as a trajectory of an ever more complex, ever more adaptive developmental

journey that is likely to be accompanied by the cognitive dissonance and emotional risk-taking that is inherent in any developmental process.

As with most developmental processes (Wilber 2000) movement is likely to represent a non-linear, iterative shifting of one's center of gravity through the various models. Wilber (2000) describes these types of developmental journeys as representative of a "holarchy" rather than a hierarchy. That is to say the journey from political correctness to decolonization may be best captured by the image of nested, Russian, Matryoshak dolls wherein each new model absorbs and integrates the previous model—both the positives and the negatives— into a more complex and holistic approach to diversity. Research is needed to test and explore this developmental notion.

Intersectionality

Another implication may be that understanding the big picture of alterity in more nuanced and complex ways will promote a greater appreciation for *intersectionality*. The theory of intersectionality suggests that all individuals have membership in multiple social identity categories, some of which provide access to unearned privileges, whereas others result in exploitation and marginalization (Cole 2009). Traditionally, the field of counseling has utilized a largely myopic alterity lens that limits our view of diverse identities as being isolated and separated categories of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, gender, (dis)abilty, and such like. We then focus on developing skills and interventions that are efficacious for each specific group, with some counselors becoming experts in LGBT issues or Pacific Islander populations, for example (Brown 2009).

However, this traditional approach of categorizing social locations represents a puzzling, reductionistic understanding of social identity, given that every individual in our society occupies multiple identity categories, with most individuals having membership in both *privileged* (e.g., white, male, cisgender) and *oppressed* (e.g., working class, female, person with a (dis)ability) socially defined categories (Shin 2015). To this end, feminist and critical race theorists developed the analytical tool of intersectionality as a means to complicate and enrich our thinking about the ways in which our social locations intersect, and to ultimately help deconstruct the individual level consequences of larger interlocking systems of power and oppression.

As evidenced within the case vignettes, this article embraces the notion of intersectionality. The reader has been asked to consider the various models of alterity as applied to multiple social locations—race/ethnicity, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation and social class. This is not an article just on six racial models of alterity or six sexual orientation models. Rather, by taking a panoramic view of alterity, and describing and understanding each alterity model as an approach to *numerous* social identities, the idea of intersectionality is reinforced. Similarly, by taking up a more complex view of alterity, counselors may be more likely to integrate intersectionality into their work. For example, they may be more likely to understand why politically correct language is helpful not just for women, but for persons with (dis)abilities, and people of color, and so forth. Or, regarding structural diversity, an emphasis on intersectionality will promote the understanding that the field not only needs to focus on hiring more practitioners of color, but also those of color that identity as gay or lesbian, as well as counselors who identity as white, transgender, and from a working class background.

In closing, the intent of this article has been to aid counselors in recognizing the various approaches to diversity that may be encountered within the counseling profession. As was demonstrated through the case vignettes, within the umbrella term of "diversity" or "diversity-

related work" counseling professionals may engage in various models of alterity that are informed by differing assumptions that promote distinct goals and require unique strategies.

This article would be remiss if it did not also note other approaches to alterity within the field of counseling. Monoculturalism, historical analysis, anti-oppression, the global south, critical multiculturalism, and critical race theory are additional models that are in use throughout the world. The six models examined here, of political correctness, difference blindness, multiculturalism, structural diversity, social justice advocacy, and decolonization, were chosen because the extant literature suggests that they are the most prominent or are gaining the most professional traction. It is hoped that if members of the counseling profession are able to clearly recognize the various models of alterity that are operating within the profession, then we as a field will be more effective in meeting the needs of those who have been traditionally under-represented and under-served.

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